

THE  
CHILD'S FRIEND.

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LETTER

TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

DEAR ALICE—You accuse me of having forgotten you, and ask me to make you some amends by giving you an account of my late journey to the White Mountains. Nothing is more difficult than to communicate one's impressions to another of a very delightful journey. Who can impart that fresh, rejoicing emotion which the pure, invigorating air of the mountains awakens? "High mountains have a feeling," and we seem to catch it from them, but cannot convey it to another. We may give the exact height of the mountain, we may describe the wreath of mist hanging on its side and gradually melting away as the early morning sun touches it, and we may descant upon his "parting sweet and farewell smile," which we have watched with glowing hearts as it faded gently from the summits of these everlasting hills, and yet we feel that we have said nothing

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that can convey to another the delight, the worship that has filled our own hearts; so I will leave you to imagine all this, and just give you a little sketch of our progress, and mention only such little anecdotes as I may remember.

We set off, two elderly ladies, and two students who were very glad to get rid of Greek and Latin and all sorts of philosophy, full of fun and hope and the anticipation of a delightful time, as the children say. The young men had their knapsacks, and meant to walk to the White Mountains, which was our destination, all the way from Sanbornton where the cars leave us. We all rejoiced at the thought that we were to have six weeks of freedom from all labor and care, and made a resolution to be just as don't-careish and happy as we could, and as foolish as we pleased. This resolution we kept. For some reasons it was found to be most desirable to pass the first night at Concord. All that happened worth mentioning there, was, that one young man left his umbrella there for the public good, which you know conforms to the character of umbrellas, and the other found that he had nicely locked his trunk and left his key at home. So he had to carry his trunk to a locksmith to have another lock put on. To do this, his German dictionary which he had just put in with a German work, lest he should pine for a little study, had to be taken out, and was unhappily left in the locksmith's shop; where it may perhaps benefit the smith or some one else in some way or other. The only thing we saw at Concord worth remembering was an Esquimaux dog: he was white with mouse-colored spots, his hair was soft as wool, very long, and slightly curled;

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he had a long and very bushy tail that looked almost like an ostrich feather. His broad forehead indicated courage and good nature, and as we caressed and noticed him, he showed a most amiable, intelligent and noble nature which we were assured he possessed.

At Sanbornton, where we dined, we parted with our two pedestrians, as we started for Centre Harbor. We arrived there at four o'clock, and at eight we had the pleasure of seeing them come down the long hill in the moonlight, and soon their merry voices were heard announcing that the walk was not too much for them. They had fallen in with a very pleasant companion, and had enjoyed themselves highly. We had waited tea for them, and a very pleasant hour we had, telling our mutual experiences. Soon we were all in a boat on the Lake, the young men singing, rowing and telling stories as the light of the moon shone on their dripping oars and happy faces.

We passed the next day, which was Sunday, at the Lake. In the afternoon the young men went rowing again; and breaking one of their oars, and then getting into a current, came near being forced to pass the night on the Lake. On Monday we joined a party to take an extra to Conway, and were on our way at six o'clock. The pedestrians started at the same time, intending to walk to Conway that day, as they were told it was only twenty-eight miles. Their new friend went back to Boston on business, but promised to meet them at the Mountains. We told our young men that we would leave notes on the road, written on birch bark, for them to pick up. By "we" I mean their two old friends and two young ladies that they had made acquaintance with.

We left three notes in rhyme at the doors of public houses, and one we threw into the road for them. The young ladies went on to the mountains, but we stopped at Conway, where we arrived at twelve o'clock, and waited for our young friends, who thought they should join us at eight in the evening. Eight o'clock came, and nine, and ten, and eleven, and no merry laugh announced them. Just as we were resigning ourselves to our disappointment, trusting that they were safely asleep under some hospitable roof, a wagon was heard upon a hill nearly a mile off, and in a short time arrived at the door with the two weary travelers. They had found that Conway was thirty-four miles instead of twenty-eight, and one of them had drank some milk, which did not suit him, and he was not well, and they had coaxed a very humane man, at the end of a hard day's work, to bring them the last seven miles of the way, and they had borrowed outside coats of the good people of the village to protect them from the night air, and here they were safe and sound, glad to handsomely remunerate the good Samaritan who brought them, but hungry and weary and a little crestfallen. A good dish of blueberries cheered them up, added to our joyful welcome, and they were soon fast asleep in a good bed. I should mention that they had picked up the note in the road, and found one at a tavern, but missed the others because they took another road.

The next day our ailing pedestrian was not well enough to proceed; so we passed the day at Conway, where his companion amused himself with rowing us about a small secluded lake, not far from the house. It was surrounded by wooded banks, and was as still and lonely as



though no sound but that of the birds had ever been heard there. The regular plash of our oars had a strange effect as it broke the stillness. Presently, as we were reaching over the edge of the boat to gather some of the water lilies that surrounded us, we heard the mournful cry of the loon; while we were looking at him, he drew his head under water, where he remained a long time, and then came up again, repeating the same sad cry; his head and neck, which was all we saw of him, resembles that of a large goose; his cry is like that of a human being. The next morning we started for the mountains, the young men at five o'clock on foot, and we at six in an open carriage. At the end of a twenty miles drive, you cross on a high bridge a wild stream called Nancy's brook; below you, you hear and see this wild mountain stream pouring itself foaming into the Saco river. On your right, at the foot of Mount Crawford, is a beautiful piece of interval land, green as early spring, studded with apple trees. The Saco flows between it and the mountain, which rises to about half the height of Mount Washington. Here is the Crawford house, and here we took up our quarters. This is eight miles short of the Notch, but it is the entrance to this sublime mountain pass. Mountains are all round you, and by five o'clock in the afternoon you are in deep shade. The sun sinks behind the mountain ridge in front of you, whose shadow you see on the opposite ridge behind the house. As the sun sinks lower and lower the shadow of the mountain grows higher, till you only see on the opposite mountains a narrow streak of sunshine that resembles a halo round their distant brown and green summits.

The old gentleman, Abel Crawford, who lives here, is

a very interesting man, and tells many interesting stories. He it was who first ascended Mount Washington—he made the first road to it—he is intimately acquainted with every feature of the scene, and loves dearly his mountain home. He has lived there for half a century. You will like to hear his story of Nancy's Brook, and why it is so called. This is the sad tale, as he related it:

Many many years ago, when there was only a horse-path through the mountains, at the farther end of the narrow pass, twelve miles from Crawford's house, which was not then built, a man, whose name had better be forgotten, built a log-house, in which he lived a part of the year. Here he used to fell trees for lumber. He had in his employ several men, and a girl by the name of Nancy who cooked their food, and performed the other work of the house. She became attached and engaged to one of the workmen; he was forced to leave her and go to Portland. He wished her to go with him, and she was nothing loth to go. But her master begged her to stay a little longer till he went to Portland, when he would take her with him. She, to oblige him, consented, though reluctantly.

Some time afterwards, in the winter, he asked her one day to follow the workmen into the woods, where they were at their work, and carry a direction from him about the length of the logs which they were to saw, that he had omitted to give them in the morning. She readily consented. As soon as she was fairly out of sight, he saddled and bridled his horse and set off to Portland without her.

The poor girl returned home from the woods, and soon understood the trick that had been played upon her.

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She waited till the next morning; she then did all her work, prepared their dinners, and when the men all went into the woods, she tied up her small bundle and set off on foot to Portland.

The Saco river crossed repeatedly the narrow bridle path that led through the narrow gap in these glorious mountains. There were no bridges, and poor Nancy had to wade through the cold mountain stream, as it leaps along its bed from rock to rock. She traveled bravely and safely on, for twelve miles of this narrow pass, so dreary for one so solitary and sad. At that time the woods were full of wild beasts, wolves, bears and foxes, and many a time on her journey she must have startled the timid deer; but all unharmed she went on till she came to a brook which fell roaring over a ledge of rocks into the Saco. This must be forded, but ere she crossed it she sat down to rest her weary limbs against an oak tree; she leaned back and fell asleep; doubtless dreams of a happy meeting with her lover made her rest beautiful and happy; from these dreams she never awoke. Some traveler to this mountain temple found her cold and dead, leaning against the oak tree near by this wild stream, which has ever since been called 'Nancy's Brook.'

The old man looked sad as he finished the story, and added, "It is said that her lover lost his mind not long after, and died insane. I don't know about that, but I should not think that the man who cheated the poor girl, and so caused her death, would have ever wanted to see these mountains again, and I believe he never came here after he heard of it."

I was a daily visitor to this beautiful stream, and never did I forget poor Nancy, and her sorrowful fate. I often

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tried to conjecture under which tree she had seated herself for her last slumber, and what was in her mind as she closed her eyes forever upon earthly sorrows and earthly hopes.

One very rainy day, while we were all at the Crawford House, one of the ladies there proposed that, in order to keep ourselves awake, we should each of us write something for a journal, to be read aloud in the evening. There were some clever things written, and some tolerable nonsense produced; but the writers are not willing to give me a copy of their contributions for your amusement. I wrote these lines upon Nancy's Brook. You will not suppose that I can think them very good; but, connected with the story I have just related, you may find some pleasure in reading them.

NANCY'S BROOK.

Have you heard the touching story  
Of poor Nancy's mournful fate?  
There it was a traveler found her;  
Stiff and frozen there she sate.

Him she loved, she fearless followed  
Though forsaken, broken hearted;  
Mark the banks of this wild streamlet—  
There it was her spirit parted.

Nancy's Brook they well may call it,  
Here her spirit seems to hover;  
'Tis a presence pure and holy,  
Teaching truth to every lover.

These mighty hills may melt away  
And back again may flow this river,



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But Nancy's brave and loving heart  
Shall live and bloom in joy forever.

Flow on, then, Nancy's Brook, flow on.  
We hear thy story sighing,  
And then take heart while thinking on  
Her love and truth undying.

We passed one very happy fortnight at the Crawford House, where you will find the best landlady that was ever known. This gave us time to enter into the character of the place, and get all the glorious scene around us by heart. We then went on to Tom Crawford's, which is situated in the narrowest part of the gorge, and is called the Notch House. But I must reserve my account of this, and the rest of our journey, for my next letter.

Yours, &c.,

E. L. F.

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## THE BIRTHDAY ARBOR.

SEE FRONTISPIECE.

WHAT is prettier than a bouquet of flowers composed of roses, sweet peas, pinks, violets, mignonette, heliotrope, orange flower, lilies of the valley, and sweetbriar. Here are ten different plants, all having a delicious perfume, all growing wild in different countries, but all made to bloom in the same country by the care of the gardener, who knows how to make a soil and climate that will suit any plant, let it come from ever so distant a spot. These flowers do not all bloom in the same season and are never seen in one collection; but I know of some flowers more beautiful than these, that can

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be seen all together, that grow in the same country, and bloom under the same shelter at all seasons, in winter, as well as summer. They are a family of children whose mother has been the gardener to take the best care of them, who daily watches over them, and sees that no angry passions grow up in their souls to plant ugly marks in their faces, and take away the bloom and beauty that love and kindness give to every face. This family is composed of children of all sizes; who all have different faces, some with blue eyes and some with brown, some with straight hair, and some with curly, some with rosy cheeks, and some with pale, some with straight noses and some with turned up noses, some with high foreheads and some with low, all differing and yet all resembling each other, and all united together by one band, that of love to their parents.

One of the happiest days of their lives, was spent in preparing a beautiful arbor in honor of their mother's birth day. This was to be a secret from the mother till it was all finished; their father was to help them with his advice, and to assist in carrying those branches which were too large for their young hands. This work was undertaken after school was over, and no duty was omitted while it was being made. The smallest of the children had something to do with it; there was to be in it moss benches for chairs, and the ground was to be cleared of stones, and made perfectly level, and then strewed with branches to serve for a carpet, as was the custom in those days when such things as carpets were not known. The doorways were to be all arched and festooned with vines; and there were to be little openings to admit the beautiful prospect beyond, and then in the middle was

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to be a centre table which their father made for them, and over this was to be placed the canary bird, whose cage always hung in the parlor; he too was to have his apartment ornamented with leaves and made so rural as to invite him to sing his best song on the great day when he should be hung up from the beautiful ceiling of green boughs over head. The mother was kept in perfect ignorance of all that was going on; she was always a great deal in the house, having so large a family, she had not much time to spend out of doors, and this was one reason that the plan was proposed. The children, at least the eldest of them, saw that their mother was much confined at home, and they often wanted to get her out of doors, but found it difficult, and this idea of the arbor pleased them particularly on this account, for they knew she would be obliged to come out on this occasion. The night before the birth-day, the arbor was finished, and the children could hardly contain their glee as they looked upon this pretty receiving hall, for their dear mother whose birth day was to be celebrated in it.

The next morning at breakfast, they reminded her that it was her birth day, and asked of her if she would not on that account let them have a holyday; she answered, they must ask their father about it; he very smilingly gave his consent. It was a beautiful day in October, too beautiful to remain in the house, and the children persuaded their mother after she had got through the business of the morning, to take a short walk with them; this she consented to do; they with secret joy led her into the beautiful place they had made for her.

The mother's eyes glistened with delight as she saw this proof of her children's love; she kissed them all, and

told them she would spend the whole day there, that they should have their dinner and supper in this beautiful place, if they were willing to bring from the house all that was necessary for the purpose ; at this proposal they all clapped their hands with delight, and were willing to go through any labor for the sake of so spending the day.

The weather was beautiful, the children were good-natured, the mother was pleased, the father was contented, the bird was tuneful, and the whole day was one of true delight to all parties. Was not this a more beautiful sight than even the sweet bouquet of flowers? These flowers could talk, and laugh, and sing; they had, too, hearts that could love, minds that could enjoy, and a heaven to live for.

S. C. C.

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### SAM. CARROLL.

"OH Mother," said Tom Hanson, one day, running into her room in breathless haste, "Jem Merrill has told me a great piece of news, he says that Sam Carroll has been the very worst boy that ever was; he has stolen Deacon May's chickens and sold them, and teased the dogs, and killed Susy's bantem—and, mother, Mr. Brown says, if he ever gets hold of Sam, he'll give him such a beating as he never had before, and he says too, if he was the Deacon, he'd shut him up in jail for six months." Here Tom paused, completely out of breath, and waited for his mother to express her astonishment and horror at Sam Carroll. But the good mother's face wore an expression of sadness and she looked steadily in



her little boy's face, as though she would read his soul,— and she did read there what troubled and grieved her, and made her silent some minutes.

“Oh Tom,” said she, at last, “how can you come here, all breathless, and impatient to tell me such bad news of your little neighbor — your face is flushed, and your manner is full of spite against poor Sam. Yesterday you sat by my side and read to me how Christ came to call sinners to repentance, and you asked me the meaning of his words, and how you could follow his holy example, and you expressed yourself able, at least to pity those who had done wrong. And yet, instead of grieving over Sam's misconduct, you really speak as if you would be glad to see him punished! Would you not far rather see him humble and penitent, and sincerely sorry for all this mischief?” “Oh mother!” said Tom, hanging his head.

“My dear boy, I do not suppose you at all know the ill feeling you are cultivating, in trying to be the first to carry such sad news. If any one shows it to you as I do now, you are shocked and surprised that anything like malice has found an entrance into your heart. Oh! do not give it any place there, shut it out, and never let it come again. Look at poor Sam as he really is. If he were sick, how gladly you would go and watch by his bedside, and read and sing to him to while away the long hours of pain, as you did to Willie May in his fever. Now Sam's soul is sick, and a blighting fever is over his character, which is far worse than any sickness of the body. And you join with all the men and boys in the street to denounce him and repeat from one person to another, all his naughty deeds. Yesterday when you

read to me how the Jews treated the Saviour, you said you did not believe if He were now on earth, people would so misunderstand him. But do you not feel that if Christ himself had stood by your side just now, His heavenly countenance would have been bowed with grief, at the thought, that eighteen hundred years after His pure doctrines of love had entered the world, a boy like you could speak of the sins of his little neighbor, with almost a tone of exultation. Oh my son, it is a far deeper cause for grief, that Sam Carroll's soul is sick, than if his body had many diseases. You said, last week, that the reason you wanted to do so much for Willie May, was because the Doctor said the effects of his fever would follow him all his life unless he now had great care and attention. But don't you know that Sam Carroll is far more likely to suffer from the effects of his soul's fever, all his life long, and that these effects are far more terrible than any disease that good and gentle Willie May will ever have?"

Tom was very silent and sad. He saw that he had not only not astonished his mother with his bad news, but that she was very much grieved for Sam, and grieved too that he did not feel the same sorrow. It was a very good trait in Tom, that he never made excuses for himself, but tried to repair any wrong he had said or done in quiet. All day he was silent and thoughtful. In the evening his uncle came in, and there was much pleasant conversation between him and his father. Tom always loved to listen to them, but to-night he was wrapped in his own thoughts. He was roused from them by hearing his father say—"I consider it a mournful thing when I see any young person quick to discover, and

quick to publish the wrong actions of his neighbor. I never knew a man foremost in doing good, or in reforming public or private evils, who had acquired a taste for slander in his youth. If a boy begins with loving to know and make known misconduct, instead of filling his soul with images of noble and generous deeds, one may be pretty sure he will grow up with a heart so narrowed and frosty, that he will be incapable of following his master in any mission of love to the unfortunate."

Poor Tom! His father and uncle never knew how deeply their conversation had touched him, but he took his little candle and walked quietly to bed, for his heart was very full. He could not go to sleep, but lay and watched the moonlight that streamed in at his little window, and rested on the white coverlet of his little bed. He thought it friendly and pleasant, and at last peaceful thoughts came to him and he fell asleep. He dreamed that two angels came and stood beside his bed in the clear moonlight, and that they talked to him. One said, "Poor Sam Carroll. He has no mother, she died when he was very young, and his bad father encourages him to do wrong." "I ought to have remembered that," said Tom mournfully; "I am very sorry I did not think of it." The other angel said, "Poor Sam — 'there is joy in heaven over one that repents,' but there is no one to lead him into the good path, and he may come to a dreadful end." "Can I do anything for him?" said Tom, so earnestly that the tones of his own voice awoke him, and he saw the moonlight still, but no angels were there, and he knew he had been dreaming. But he remembered those words he had so often heard his father read — "He that saveth a soul from death, shall cover a multitude of

sins"—and as he thought of them, a purpose ripened in his young spirit of which we shall know more hereafter.

Next morning Tom went to school. He met a group of boys all talking very loud and fast about Sam Carroll. "Bill Green says he's a very wicked boy," said one, "and that he has no doubt he will end his days on the gallows." "Does he?" said Tom's uncle, who passed by at the moment, "I should think, then, that Bill Green would feel too sadly at such a prospect to speak of it. And what does he intend to do to prevent such a dreadful end of Sam's career?" The boys were silent and confused.

When Tom went home he saw Sam lounging about, lazy and dogged, his feet dangling over a stile and his arms a kimbo, looking at the scornful passers by with an air of sullen defiance. "At least," said Tom to himself, "I can keep him from worse mischief, for he knows how to do many things well." So he slowly approached Sam, with a sad but kind expression on his face. "Will you go to walk with me?" said Tom. "No!" said Sam, "You know you don't like me, why should I go?" "Oh," said Tom, "I really wanted to ask a favor of you, but you won't let me, so good bye." As he walked away, Sam's curiosity was raised to such a height, that he felt as if he must gratify it. "Hold on, Tom," said he, "what's your great favor you want to ask?" Tom turned and said, "Why Sam, you know you used to make nice little wooden toys for children, and now Christmas is coming, I want to give some to my little brothers and sisters, and if you'll make some for me, and show me how you make them, I'll give you half the money I have laid by for Christmas presents." "Is that



all?" said Sam, "why I supposed you wanted to scold and make a fuss like the other boys, about my stealing, and all that sort of thing—they have taken pretty good care to tell it all over town." "Oh Sam," said Tom, "I did not mean to do that, but if you only will take some of the money I give you for the toys, and buy poor little Susy May another bantem, I shall be so happy." He said no more, however, for he did not think it a good time when Sam's mind was so embittered, to talk much with him. By degrees, however, as they became associated in the little business of making the Christmas presents, Sam's heart was softened. He became more open and frank towards Tom than to others, and very slowly and kindly and humbly too, did Tom try to correct his bad ways. So quietly was the change brought about in Sam, that he hardly knew it himself—hardly knew to whom he owed his better character and name. Sometimes when Tom thought of Sam's forlorn home he would take him home to his own cheerful fireside, and there he played games with the children, or rejoiced in the wholesome supper that Tom's good mother provided. And he too, when tired with play, listened with Tom to the good and noble conversation between the father and uncle. Among these good people, he learned a higher standard of duty, and his conscience was quickened and sensitive.

About five years after the period at which my story commenced, Tom Hanson again burst into his mother's room, his whole face radiant with happiness, and his eye kindling with joy,—"Oh mother," said he, "good news! good news! Sam Carroll has been taken into Mr. Bacon's counting-house, with the promise of a certain salary, so that he can now do something for his sick sister,

and this is all on account of his honesty and industry. Mr. Bacon says he would trust him with untold gold. Isn't it fine, mother? He's a grand fellow, so noble and conscientious. Nothing mean and small about Sam, mother."

She turned her eyes from the happy face of her son to a book on her table, and read with deep satisfaction, these words of Thomas A. Kempis, "He that joyfully speaks of his neighbor's virtues, presents to Jesus a bouquet of fair flowers."

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### HYMN.

BY ELIZABETH BARRETT BARRETT.

"Lord, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me."

PSALM cxli.

"The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him."

PSALM cxlv.

SINCE without Thee we do no good,  
And with Thee do no ill,  
Abide with us in weal and woe,—  
In action and in will.

In weal,—that while our lips confess  
The Lord who "gives," we may  
Remember, with an humble thought,  
The Lord who "takes away."

In woe,—that while to drowning tears  
Our hearts their joys resign,  
We may remember *who* can turn  
Such water into wine.

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By hours of day, — that when our feet  
O'er hill and valley run,  
We still may think the light of truth  
More welcome than the sun.

By hours of night, that when the air  
Its dew and shadow yields,  
We still may hear the voice of God  
In silence of the fields.

Oh! then sleep comes on us like death,  
All soundless, deaf and deep.  
Lord! teach us so to watch and pray,  
That death may come like sleep.

Abide with *us*, abide with *us*,  
While flesh and soul agree;  
And when our flesh is only dust,  
Abide our souls with *Thee*.

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### I CANNOT REMEMBER.

PERCY's father was a stage-driver. He rose early every day, harnessed his horses, and went away. Percy did not see him again till night.

When it was nearly time for the stage to come in, away ran Percy to meet it on a bridge which it always passed over in its way home. When his father saw him, capering and jumping on the bridge, he stopped a moment. Percy climbed up, as quickly as he could, to the coach box. Then his father cracked his whip, and the horses sprang forward again. Very happy was the little

boy, riding about the town, and nodding and smiling to his playmates, from his high perch.

Percy was a loving little fellow. He loved every body, but his father he loved most of all. He would hug him so tight sometimes, about the neck, that he almost choked him. His loud smacking kisses could be heard as far off as the sound of his pop-gun, when he fired off potato bullets. He followed at his father's heels just like a little dog, all the while he was about his work in the morning. When there was any thing for him to do, he did it joyfully. He was glad to help his father. He ran as fast as his little feet would carry him, when he was sent for any thing. He always brought it with a smile; it was so delightful to be useful, and to have his father say, "Thank you, my son." He felt much taller for some time after, and walked about with his hands in his pockets, and holding up his head like a man.

"My son, did you pick up the chips in the yard?" said Percy's father, one evening.

"Yes, father, a great lot! O, very fine chips, mother said. 'Takes me to pick up chips.'"

"Well, very well. Did you pick up the apples under the trees?"

"Yes, I never forget that. You had at your supper some of mother's great pan-pie, made of them. But for me you would have had none."

"Thank you then, my little man. Did you remember all day not to throw your cap down in the dirt?"

"No, father. I flung it down when I came in to dinner. I was so hungry, you know, I forgot to hang it on my nail. I had to go bare-headed all the afternoon.



Somebody hid it. I rather suspect my mother, for she laughed to see me hunting for it."

"Well, but for that, I should have punished you."

"Why, father, I forgot. I always mean to mind. I do not disobey."

"You do disobey."

"I cannot help it. My head won't remember."

"Your head must be taught to remember."

"I remember apples and chips."

"You are a good boy to work. But you neglect my orders about trifles. You disobey me about your cap and your shoe-strings."

Percy was tired of hearing about his cap and shoe-strings. So he began to play with his father's whip-lash, coiling it up on the floor.

"I see the strings are both lost, because you have not kept them tied, as I told you."

"They always come untied just when I am in a hurry. I always say, I will tie them directly, when I am not busy. But I never do."

"It is dangerous for you to be running about, with your shoe-strings trailing on the floor. Some day they will trip you up, and throw you down stairs."

O to-day I stepped on one just as I was going into the wood-house, and I pitched right into the chips. See my nose, how it is scratched! And both hands were full of splinters."

"I hope you will remember it. I want you to look me right in the face, and mind what I say. Leave off playing with the whip-lash. Are you attending?"

"Father, how the man laughed yesterday, when you cawed like a crow after his lean horses!"

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"That has nothing to do with your shoe-strings, that I can see. I am not going to have your new shoes run down at the heel, and worn all out of shape, like your last, I give you to understand. If I see you again without strings in your shoes, and tied up snug, why—look out."

Percy laughed.

"You young saucebox, what are you laughing at?"

"Because I know I can't remember. I could not help laughing."

"You will laugh out of the wrong side of your mouth, if you don't mind me, and tie your shoes."

Percy laughed more heartily than before.

"Why, I know I can't remember," said he.

"I shall doctor your memory, then."

At this Percy rolled on the floor with mirth. Medicine for an infirm memory was so droll an idea! How could it do any good!

The next day Percy was rather less heedless. Tying a knot was a slow job with him, and in his haste to be dressed and abroad, he often did it so carelessly that it soon came untied. He remembered to give the bows a final twitch that morning, though, and the next.

The third day he thought of it, but he was late, and thought he would not stop, just then. After breakfast he tightened the knot, and lauded himself greatly for so doing.

Next day he was content with half tying, because he could so well make all snug after breakfast. When he left the table, he looked down at his feet. "I will attend to it after the horses are gone," said he to himself. But he did not.

When he went to meet the stage on the bridge, he did not caper and jump but stood still, with one foot drawn a little back. His father stopped as usual, but when he saw that one shoe had lost its string, he sternly told him to go home, and take his seat on an old saddle in the barn chamber, there to stay till he had leave to quit.

Home went Percy, with his finger in his mouth, and turning very red whenever he saw a playmate. When asked to play, he civilly refused. He was not at leisure. He thanked them, he could not stop very well.

On his way there were some willow trees. He broke off a twig. "When I get upon the saddle," thought he, "I can at least play horse, and shall want a switch."

But he threw it away again, when he found himself soberly sitting down upon the old saddle, in disgrace with his father. He could not play.

By and by he heard his father come home, and put up his horses. He started whenever he heard his voice, hoping he was calling him. Its mellow deep tones came like music to his ear, and made him feel lonely, all by himself in the still, spacious barn-chamber.

"I wish I had minded father," said he. "There! I could *not* remember. Yet I think I could in future. Only I do hate to tie my shoes."

It was beginning to be dark. The streak of sunshine which came in upon the seedy floor faded and vanished as he heard his father's firm tread upon the stair. His heart beat quick, and he half rose up, to be ready to run. But the call did not come from his father's lips, which were busily employed in whistling, while he came to a tool-box not far from Percy's corner. He turned

over the things awhile, made choice of something, and went down stairs with it. Poor Percy, expecting every moment to be spoken to, said not a word.

His father had not once looked at him. He was thinking how strange that was, and whether he ought not to have spoken to say he was sorry, when he heard the barn-door shut and locked. Then he heard foot-steps crossing the yard; the sound of the scraper, and the loud clap of the heavy house door, told him that his father had gone in to supper.

"He has forgotten me! he has forgotten me!" cried Percy in an agony. The tears burst forth, and ran down upon his collar, and in his anger he gave the old saddle a hearty thump. Then he laughed because he had hurt his own knuckles in doing it.

"When they sit down to supper my mother will miss me," said he, and sat still again, listening. He heard only the horses crunching their well earned provender.

Just as he had made up his mind that he was to sit there till bed-time, if not all night, the key was put into the lock and turned.

"Percy, do you think your memory has had medicine enough?"

"O yes, father, a great plenty," cried Percy.

"You are quite sane? Eh?"

"I think I can remember in future very well."

"Come and eat your supper, then. Don't be in such a hurry as to fall down stairs. O, here you are. Glad to see you. It is long since I had that pleasure. I have missed you very much. And I fancy the horses looked about, wondering what had become of you."

"Why, how do you do, Mr. Percy?" cried his mother,



as he entered the kitchen. "Are you not fatigued, after your long ride?"

Percy was hungry and out of spirits. He could not keep the tears back at his mother's ill-timed raillery.

"O, never mind it my son," said she, kindly clapping his shoulder. "We have not eaten all the griddle-cakes, and there is some nice honey which your father brought home."

After this Percy was more heedful. Now and then he had a short ride upon the saddle, for leaving gates and doors unlatched, which he had been ordered to keep shut, or leaving tools and other things out of place. But on the whole he was pretty faithful for some time, giving heed to obey in trifles as well as in what he thought more important.

His parents were pleased and happy. They were good people themselves, and their chief wish was to see their children grow up good and useful. Percy was a capable boy and willing to work. And now he was anxious to do just right, and ready to *mind*, which means to *remember* as well as to *obey*.

"I would not exchange my little chap here for any other in town of his inches," said his father one day. "At least without considerable to boot."

"He *is* a good little shaver," echoed his mother.

"Our Percy is worth his weight in sugar candy," said his sisters.

"Fact, Percy shall go to muster with us, next time, said his brothers. "He is real pleasant and obliging."

Being praised much and often, Percy began to be a little vain. He thought as he was so much better than other little boys, he need not take quite so much pains,

at least about trifles. He began by staying longer on errands. Then he put off one thing, and forgot, then another, till at last he was nearly as forgetful and heedless as ever. Scolding came now instead of praise, quite often. He thought himself ill used, and grew more careless daily.

One night he had two or three boys with him, when he met the stage at the bridge. His good-natured father let them all clamber up, and perch like monkeys, in different places about the stage. Percy took for himself the least safe position. He was more used to riding, he said; *he* should not fall.

But as the stage rolled rapidly through the broad street, he happened to remember that his shoe was untied. He let go his hold upon the rail, and began to try to tie it before his father should perceive it. A sudden jolt threw him off upon the whirling wheel, which flung him to some distance. His fall was unnoticed for a moment, except by his playmates. Before they could call his father's attention by their screams, a heavy baggage wagon came thundering on, directly where he lay. Then they raised a perfect yell of fear and distress, the stage stopped, and Percy's father leaped to the ground. He would have been too late to save his son, however, but the horses of the baggage wagon, when they saw Percy in their path, swerved aside very kindly. Then the driver of the wagon, seeing something in the road, jumped off to take it up, thinking it some great coat, or bundle, fallen from the stage, which had just passed him. As he raised the body of Percy, it hung over his arm as if he were dead entirely. The face was covered with dust and blood.

The boys ran in different directions for the doctor, while Percy was laid on one of the seats in the stage, and carried home. His mother fainted when she saw him.

Percy was only stunned; he opened his eyes, when his wounds and bruises were washed. The last thing he remembered was the trampling of the wagon horses, almost upon him. He always loved those horses dearly after that, he was so grateful to them for turning aside.

It was many weeks before Percy was allowed to run and play again. His head had struck the wheel, and the physician could not tell for many days whether he would get well or not. The brain might be injured. He was kept in a large cradle, and not allowed to try to get up. When he was restless he was gently rocked. He had medicine to take, at regular hours; every body whispered, and went tiptoe about his darkened room. Pretty soon he was very hungry, but was allowed only a little gruel now and then.

At last the great swellings upon the side of the head went away. Percy's face, which had been of all the colors of the rainbow, looked pretty natural again, where it was not scarred and scratched. Right glad was he to leave off his slippers, and *tie* on his shoes for a walk.

Percy never forgot the cause of his fall from the stage. He thought a great deal about it while he was shut up in his dark room. He longed to be out again, and thought it would not be too much to mind his father *always*, and at all times. A.

## THE CENTAGENARIAN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF JEAN PAUL.

MOST of our young friends are familiar with the remark, even if their own experience have not delightfully proved its truth, that old age and childhood are the two periods of life which come closest together and most easily assimilate. The arm-chair of the venerable grandfather or grandmother is the favorite haunt of prattling infancy. Life's first and last steps have much in common together, and the purest pleasures of its beginning and end are found in the simple objects of Nature. We therefore have no hesitation in placing before our youthful readers the following sketch of a centagenarian, drawn by the master-hand of Richter. It forms the conclusion of his memoir of Fibel, the author of the Bienenroda Spelling-book.

In order to bring it within the compass of this work, as well as to render it more intelligible to the young reader, many omissions have necessarily been made, but no alterations whatever. A literal translation has been aimed at as far as possible. It thus commences:

"Much that comes to pass is unexpected, and here is what I myself should not believe, if I myself did not relate it. We never think so much about our heads, as when looking for something in them (as I now am for a respectable ending) or carrying something on top of them, as butchers and masons, or washer-women with their baskets — *crow*n-carriers, too, make no exception.



The affair was on this wise; the stream of Fibel's history having vanished under ground like a second river Rhone, I was obliged to explore where story or stream again burst forth, and for this purpose questioned every one. I learned that no one could better inform me than the old patriarch of Bienenroda, an exceedingly aged man, of more than a hundred and twenty-five years, who lived a few miles out of the village, and must certainly know all about it, as he was young at the same time with Fibel. Believe me, not the glory of being a Hadrian (for that Emperor inquired of the oracle concerning the circumstances of Homer's life, in the same way that I was about to inquire of the old man in regard to the A. B. C. writer), but the near prospect of at length attaining my life-long wish—to shake hands with the very oldest man living on the earth enraptured me. Yet I conceived him to be less a Methuselah of 969 years of age, than a Peter Zort, the Hungarian, who lived 185 years; because the old Hungarian seems now, to our present feelings, habits, and consciousness, even older than Methuselah. 'A peculiar sensation,' said I, 'indeed a most novel one, must be excited by a whole past century before you, bodily present, compact and alive, in the one now passing—by holding hand to hand, a man of the age of the antediluvians, over whose head so many entire generations of young mornings and old evenings have fled, and before whom, in fact, one stands neither as young nor old—to listen to a human spirit, outlandish, behind the time, almost mysteriously awful; sole survivor of the thousand cold gray sleepers and co-ævals of his own remote hoary age, looking, as sentinel before the ancient dead, coldly and strangely on life's silly no-

velties ; finding in the present no cooling for his in-born spirit-thirst, no more enchanting yesterdays or tomorrows, but only the day before yesterday of youth, and the day after tomorrow of death. And as it may consequently be imagined, that so very old a man would speak only of his farthest past, of his early day dawn, which of course in the long evening of his protracted day, must now be blending with the evening glow of his midnight, he should either have been from the first, or have grown, romantic in his feelings ; his death-sun rising for him at late midnight, before his hoary age has quite expired.'

On the other part, however, one like myself, will not feel particularly younger before such a millionaire of hours, as the Bienenroda senior must be ; and he will be in his presence far more conscious of death than of immortality. An old man is a more powerful memento than a grave ; indeed the older the latter is, the farther back we look to the succession of young persons, who one after another have mouldered in it — sometimes it is a maiden who is concealed in an ancient grave — but an ancient dwindled body, hides only an imprisoned spirit.

An opportunity for visiting him was presented by a return coach and six, belonging to a Count, on which I was admitted to a seat with the coach-man. Just before arriving at Bienenroda, he pointed with his whip to an orchard, tuneful with song, and said, 'there sits the old man with his little animals around him.' I sprang from the noble equipage and went towards him. The Count's six horses, I ventured to expect, would give me before the old man the appearance of a man of rank, apart from the simplicity of my dress, whereby princes

and heroes always distinguish themselves from their tinselled lacqueys; I was therefore a little surprised that the old man, not even checking the barking of his poodle, kept on playing with his hare, until at last — as if Counts were his daily bread — he slowly lifted his oil-cloth hat from a head covered with hair.

With a buttoned overcoat, which gave room to see his vest; a long pair of knit overalls — in fact they were his enormous stockings, and a neck handkerchief, or cravat, which hung down to his bosom, the old man's dress looked modern enough. His time-worn frame was far more peculiar, the inner part of the eye which is black in childhood, being quite white — his tallness, more than his years, seemed to bow him over into an arch — the out-turned point of his chin gave to his speech the appearance of mumbling, and yet the expression of his countenance was lively, his eyes bright, his jaws full of white teeth, and his head covered with light hair.

I at length commenced with saying that I had taken horses solely on his account, 'to see a man for whom assuredly there could be little new under the sun, though he himself was something very new under it.' And that I might bring about his communications concerning Fibel, I continued, 'You are now strictly in your five and twenties, a man in your best years, since after a century a new reckoning commences. Hence persons who begin to count their years again upwards from one, as Dame\*

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\* See Sigand de la Fond's Dictionary of the Wonders of Nature. The old man of Rechingen, who lived to be 120 years old, had new teeth four years before his death, which in six months dropped out and gave place to others, and these to others in succession. *Richter.*

Verdut, for instance, or the old man of Rechingen, obtain new teeth and hair, and grow young in every way — I infer the same, indeed, from your own hair and grinders. It is otherwise with a man in his eighties, like Peter Zort, the Hungarian. He indeed, when in his eighty-fifth year, after having already counted a century, could have expected in the course of nature, nothing but what followed, namely, death. I have heard, too, of a man in Bengal, who lived to be 370 years old, and renewed his hair and teeth four times, and had besides seventy wives, which proves at least, if in this as in other stories, we accept but the half of it as true, that a man may live 185 years. Indeed were I to reckon in the intercalary days, you become somewhat older than you pass for."

Jean Paul here commences a little calculation, and then proceeds.

"I had so involved myself—especially in the fine spinning of my astronomical compliment, that in truth the old man could hardly have known what to answer; and so he said nothing.

I resumed, 'for myself, I am willing to confess, that after once clambering over the century-terminus, or church-wall, of a hundred years, I should neither know how old I was, nor whether I was myself; but fresh and free, just as the world's history has often done, I should begin counting again from the year one, in the middle of a thousand years. Still, why cannot a man live to be as old as many a giant Indian tree, still standing? It would be well to question all very old people, on the methods by which they have prolonged their lives. How do you in special, dear old Sir, account for it? To me it seems



difficult (I ended in some vexation at the good man's silence) to deduce a long life from a long nose alone, though a Frenchman, as I remember to have heard or read somewhere, maintains this assertion.'

'Some suppose' — the old man softly replied — 'that it is because I have always been cheerful, and adopted the maxim 'never\* sad, ever glad,' but I ascribe it wholly to our dear Lord God; since the animals which here surround us, though they also are never sad, but happy, at least for the most part, yet by no means exceed so frequently as man, the usual boundary of life; for he exhibits the image of the eternal God, even in the length of his duration.' The man paused. Such words concerning God, uttered by a tongue 125 years old, have great weight and consolation — and I felt at once their beautiful attraction; but on mentioning the animals, the old man turned again to his own, and, as though indifferent to him who had come in a coach and six, he began again to play with his menagerie, the hare, the spaniel, the silky poodle, the starling, and a couple of turtle-doves on his bosom; a pleasant bee-colony also in the orchard, gave heed to him, when with one whistle he sent away the bees, and with another summoned them into the ring of creatures which surrounded him like a court-circle.

At last he said, 'No one need be surprised that a very old man, who has forgotten every thing, and whom no one but the dear God knows or cares for, should give

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\* In the original, the old man is made to repeat this proverb half in German and half in Latin, at the same time transposing the sense, to indicate the feeble wandering of the memory in the extremity of age.

himself wholly to the dear animals. To whom can an old man be of much use? I wander about in the villages as one in wholly strange cities; if I see children, they come before me like the gray years of my own childhood; if I see old men, they seem like my past hoary years. I do not quite know where I now belong, and I hang between heaven and earth; yet God ever looks on me bright and lovingly with his two eyes, the sun and moon. Moreover the animals lead to no sin, but rather to devotion, and when my turtle doves brood over and feed their young, it seems to me just as if I saw God himself doing a great deal, because they derive their love and instinct towards their young, as a gift from Him.' The old man suddenly fell into a long silence, and looked pensively before him, as was his wont; a ringing of christening bells at Bienenroda sounded hither among the trees in the garden. He at last wept a little, and I know not how it happened that I could have been so simple, after the beautiful words uttered by him, as to have mistaken his tears for a sign merely of the weakness of his old eyes. 'Since I do not hear well, on account of my age,' he said, 'it always seems to me as if the baptismal bell from the distant sanctuary sounded up here very faintly; the hundred years, old years of my childhood, ascend from the ancient depths of time and gaze on me in wonder, while I and they know not whether we should weep or laugh. Oh, Oh!' he then added, 'come hither, Alter!' meaning his silky poodle.

He himself had now brought me on the way towards the purpose of my visit. 'Excellent Sir,' I began, 'within that very sanctuary with which you are familiar, I have been preparing the biography of the deceased Mas-

ter Gotthelf Fibel, author of the famous spelling book, and I have now only to end it with the narrative of his death.' Here the old man chuckled and made a low bow. 'No one can know more about his decease than yourself, and you especially are the only person who can enrich me with the rare traits of his childhood, because every incident that is inscribed on the child's brain, like names cut into a gourd, grows deeper with years, while later incisions disappear. Tell me, for goodness sake, all that you know concerning the departed man, as I am to publish his life at the Michaelmas fair.'

He muttered, 'excellent genius — scholar — man of letters — author most fam—,' till I supposed that the old man intended myself; I was about declining the compliments, but he would not be interrupted, and he was referring to himself. He continued, 'these and other fine titles I had learned by heart and applied to myself, while I was that vain blinded Fibel, who wrote and published the ordinary spelling book in question.'

The old man then is the blessed Fibel himself! A hundred and twenty-five, aye, eighteen hundred and eleven notes of admiration in a row, would but feebly paint my astonishment!"

Then follows a long conversation upon Fibel, and Jean Paul continues.

"He went into his little garden-house — I followed him, and he whistled; instantly his black squirrel came down from a tree, whither it had gone more for pleasure than for food. Many birds — nightingales, thrushes, starlings — flew back into the open window from the tops of the trees. A bulfinch which, through age, had changed its colour from red to black, strutted about the room,

uttering droll sounds which it could not make distinct. The hare pattered about in the twilight, first on his hind, and then with his fore-feet — there was not a dog in the house which did not bound forward in glad, loving, human glee; but the most joyful was the poodle, who knew that he was now to have the leaden box with compartments fastened to his neck, containing the list of the articles for supper, which he was to bring from the inn in Bienenroda. He was Fibel's victualler, or provision-wagon. The other ministering brethren and sisters of Fibel, were only the children, who ran back and forth.

His next remark was, 'We ought even to assist the circumscribed animals, by educating them as far as we can, since we are in a certain degree their Lord God; and we should train them to good morals, for they may very possibly continue to live after death. God and the animals are always good, but not so, man.' He then permitted me to quicken his memory with mine. Old men give spiritual, as they give all material things — with a shaking hand, which drops half; but I succeeded in gathering up without loss, what follows: — He might have been about a hundred years old, when on a second birth-night, he cut a new set of teeth amid pains which disturbed him with wild dreams. He seemed to be holding in his hands a broad sieve, of which it was his task to pull apart, one by one, the meshes. The wooden rim and the close net work gave him indescribable trouble, and he could not separate them, until, dreaming on, he at last, instead of the sieve, seemed to hold in his hand all the great bright sun, which flamed up into his face. He awoke new-born, and slumbered again as if on waving tulips; then he dreamed that he was a hundred and



one years old — and that he died as an innocent yearling child, without earth's woe or earth's guilt, and found on high his parents, who brought before him a long procession of his children, which had remained invisible to him on the earth, because they were transparent like the angels.

He rose from his bed, not only with new teeth, but with new ideas. The old Fibel was consumed, and a true Phoenix stood in his place, sunning its coloured wings. He had risen glorified out of no other grave than that of his own body. The world retreated; heaven came down.

When he had related these things to me, he at once bade me good night, not waiting for the return of the ministering poodle, and with hands folded for prayer, showed me the road. I withdrew, but rambled a long time round the orchard, which had sprung entirely from stones which he had planted. Indeed he seldom ate a cherry without smuggling the stone — often to the annoyance of the peasants who want no high things on their boundaries — and burying it in the ground for a resurrection, 'I cannot,' said he, 'destroy a fruit-stone; if the peasant should hereafter pull up the tree, it will still have lived a little while, and die as a child.'

While in the orchard, I heard an evening hymn played and sung — and I had only to return to Fibel's window, to see him slowly turning a hand-organ, which he accompanied with his own singing through a soft evening hymn. This organ, aided by his fragment of a voice, sufficed in its monotonous uniformity for his domestic devotion, and I went away repeating the song.

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SECOND DAY.

I knew when I returned to him in the morning, that he would have half forgotten me — this is natural in the night-frost of old age, which, almost without a present, lives only on the past and the future. The sand in the hour-glass of an aged life, all lies beneath, the pile keeps rising higher, and you may call it a grave, or the past.

Beautiful was the morning in the orchard. The hoar frost of age seemed thawed and fluid, and to glisten only as morning dew on Fibel's after-blossom. Even the affection of his animals towards him, who like children, seemed to divine who loved them, rendered the morning more beautiful in an orchard, of which every tree had for its mother some fruit which had been enjoyed by him. His domain of animals was an inheritance from his parents, though consisting of course, of the great, great, &c., grand-children of those which had belonged to them. All the trees harboured singing and brooding birds, and with a slight whistle he could lure down the tame posterity of his father's\* singing-school, in a body, from their top-sprays, to his shoulder. It was refreshing to the heart, to see how quickly the tender flutterers surrounded him. Wherever the rays of the sun could gleam, it was his custom, with the infantine satisfaction of a gray-headed child, to hang up, either on sticks or in the trees, little coloured glass balls, and in this accordion of silver, gold, and jewel-hues, he took indescribable delight. I gave him full credit for them; these particoloured sun-balls, varying the green with more than ten flaming tints, were like crystal tulip-beds — many of the red ones in-

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\* The father of Fibel had been a bird-fancier.

deed, seemed like ripe apples among the branches. The old man however, was most charmed with the reflections of the landscape from his little world-spheres, resembling the moving prospects shadowed forth in a diminishing mirror. 'Ah!' said he, 'when I thus closely contemplate the colours which God has given to this dark world, and calls forth by his sun, it seems to me as if I had departed and were already with God; and yet since He is *in* us, we are always with God.'

Here I at last interrupted him, with a question which I had been saving for a long time — how it was, that at his age, his German was purer almost, than even that of the best writers? — 'I was somewhere near two years old,' he replied, — counting, it is to be understood, after the end of the century — 'when I happened to hear during several years, on every Sabbath, a holy, spiritual minister, who spoke his German with such an angel-tongue, that had he at any time died in the pulpit, he would not have needed a better in heaven.' It was not in his power to tell me the preacher's name nor his city, but he described his manner in the pulpit — how he spoke with no superfluity of words, airs or gestures — uttering things the most beautiful and forcible, in mild tones — how the man, like a John, with his resting-place close to heaven, spoke to the world, laying his hands calmly on the pulpit-desk as an arm-case; — how his every tone was a heart, and his every look a blessing — how the energy of this disciple of Christ was embedded in love, as the firm diamond is found in the midst of the ductile gold which afterwards encases it for man — how the pulpit was to him a Tabor, whereon he transfigured both himself and his hearers, and how of all clergymen, he best

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performed that which is most difficult, — the *praying* worthily.

My feelings towards the time-worn man grew constantly warmer, yet I required from him a full return of my affection, as little as I should from a child. At last I reminded myself that I ought to depart, in order not to disquiet the peace of his evening days with any thing of the world. I would have him preserve undisturbed that sublime position of old age, where man lives, as it were, at the pole — no star rises or goes down; the whole firmament is motionless and clear, while the Pole-star of the second world shines fixedly right over head. I therefore said to him, that I would return at evening and take my leave. To my surprise he replied, that at evening, he should perhaps take leave himself of the whole world, and that he wished not to be disturbed when dying; this evening he was to read through the Revelation of John, and the end might easily be with him also. I ought to have mentioned before, that he did nothing but read, and that he read nothing but the Bible, through from beginning to end; and hence he had a fixed belief — in consequence of which he read the last books faster — that he should depart on concluding the 20th and 21st verses of the 22d chapter of the Revelation of John, 'He which testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen.'

Little as I believed in so sudden a withering of his protracted after-blossom, I still obeyed his latest formed wish — we should do well, at every right wish of a man, to think whether it may not be his last — took my leave, requesting him to entrust me with his testamentary com-



missions for the village. He said that they had been taken charge of long ago, and the children knew them. He cut off a twig from a christmas tree, co-eval with his childhood, and presented me with it as a keep-sake.

In the beautiful summer night, I could not refrain from stealthily approaching the house through the orchard, to ascertain whether my good old man had ended his Bible and life together. On the way, I found the torn envelope of a letter, sealed with a black seal, and over me the white storks were speeding their return to warmer countries; there was room for despondency. I was not much encouraged, when I heard all the birds singing in his orchard; for their ancestors had done the same when his father died. A towering cloud, full of the latest twilight, spread itself before my short-sighted eyes, like a far off, blooming, foreign landscape, and I could not comprehend how it was, that I had never before noticed this strange-looking, reddish land; so much the more easily did it occur to me, 'this is his Orient, whither God is leading the weary one.' I had become so confused, as actually to mistake a red bean-blossom for a little bit of fallen sun-set. At last in the orchard, I heard a man singing and the accompaniment of an organ; in brief, it was the old man, tuning undisturbed his evening hymn,

'Lord of my life, another day

Once more hath sped away.'

The birds in the room besides, and those on the distant branches chimed in with his song. The bees too joined their humming, as in the warm summer night they dived into the cups of the linden-blossoms; my joy kindled into a flame.

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He was alive! But I would not disturb his holy evening. 'Let him remain,' said I, 'with him who surrounds him with his gifts and with years, and not be called to think on any man here below.'

After having listened through, to the last verse of his hymn, that I might be still more certain of the actual continuance of his life, I slipped away tardily, and still found to my joy, in the eternal youth of nature, beautiful references to his lengthened age—from the everlasting rippling of the brook in the meadow, to a late swarm of bees which had settled themselves, (probably that forenoon before two o'clock,) on a linden tree, as if, by taking their lodging with him, he was to be their bee-father and continue to live—every star twinkled to me a hope."

The last visit to him is thus described :

Very early in the morning I went straight to the orchard, wishing to look at the old man while in sleep, death's ancient prelude, warm dream of cold death. But in his large printed Bible, with the help of the bright torch of morning, he had already read far beyond the deluge, as I saw by the engravings.

As I held it to be my duty not to interrupt his solitude long, I told him that I was departing, and gave him a little farewell billet, instead of farewell words. I withdrew, much moved, though silent; it was not the kind of emotion with which we take leave of a friend, a youth, an old man; but it was the parting from a remote stranger-being, who scarcely glances at us from the high cold clouds which hold him between the earth and sun. There is a stillness of soul resembling the still-

ness of bodies on a frozen sea or high mountains ; every loud tone is an interruption, as in the softest adagio, too prosaically harsh. Even those words, "for the last time," the old man had long since left behind him.

And yet he hastily presented or bequeathed to me my favourite flower, romantic in hue and fragrance, a blue Spanish Vetch in an earthen pot, the sweeter, inasmuch as this butterfly of a flower so easily exhales its perfume, and then dies. He begged me not to take it amiss if, since he had not yet sung the usual morning hymn which followed the survival of his death evening, he should not accompany, nor even once look after me, especially as he could not see very well. He then added, almost with emotion, "Oh Friend, may you live virtuously ! We meet again, where my departed relatives will also be present, and that great preacher, whose name I have forgotten. We meet again !"

He immediately turned quite tranquilly to his hand-organ. I parted from him as from a life. Though he played on his organ beneath the trees and had his face turned towards me, I still knew that to his dim eyes I should quickly become a motionless cloud ; and so I remained standing, until he began his morning hymn from old Neander :

"The Lord still leaves me living,  
I hasten Him to praise ;  
My joyful spirit giving,  
He hears my early lays."

During the singing his birds flew round him ; the dogs too appeared accustomed to the music and were silent, and it even wafted the swarm of bees into their hive. Distant as he was from me, and much as he was bowed

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down by age towards the grave, he yet looked from where I stood, on account of his tall figure, sufficiently erect. I remained standing until the old man had sung the twelfth and last verse of his morning hymn :

“Ready my course to finish,  
And come, O God, to thee,  
A conscience pure I cherish,  
Till death shall summon me.”

I then slowly pursued my way. L. O.

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### THE GOOD WOMAN.

EVER since the decease of a good woman in our pleasant village of B——, for whom I felt respect and affection, I have wished to pay some tribute to her memory : it is well to remember the good we witness, and well, if we can, to portray what we see for those who had not our opportunity for observation. More than 20 years have passed since first I knew Mrs. I——. She was the widow of a gardener, who I have been told had impoverished his family by a habit of intemperance. After his death his widow learned that he was in debt to the grocer ; she determined to earn money to pay this debt by washing ; leaving her young family of five children, the younger in care of the eldest, she went out to work by the day till she accomplished this purpose, and continued it to earn a support for herself and her children. These children were not neglected, but impressed by their mother with principles and manners like her own, the latter somewhat modified since by the age and country in which they live. There was a charm in these



manners that I can hardly hope to describe as I have felt; it seems too little to say, as is sometimes said, that they are "minor morals," they were something more—the finer essence—the flower of morality, whose root was in the heart. There was a union of dignity and self-respect with respect for others, a perfect calmness and self-possession, with civility and deference, seldom seen in any rank of life. In character, high integrity, with humility and gentleness, delicacy with firmness, disinterestedness with gratitude, untiring industry and uniform cheerfulness.

On one occasion she had done for us a longer day's work than usual, from early morning till late in the evening. I of course wished her to take extra pay; not an added cent however could I induce her to take. "Thank you ma'am," she said, making the slight respectful curtesy which was instinctive with her, (that obsolete habit so graceful, so significant,) "thank you ma'am, I never take but five shillings ma'am," and no entreaties could prevail on her to receive more money, though always willing to accept any little present that was offered her. We were moving that day, and sentiment led her to stay till all was in order; she did not want pay. In this course of life she persevered for many years, until her daughters by their industry were able not only to support themselves, but to aid their mother; one as dress-maker, another by living at service, earned enough, added to their mother's savings, to purchase a house, and by earnest persuasion they induced their parent to give up work abroad. Her health had suffered from too constant exertion, and occasionally for the few last years she had to depend altogether upon

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her children and other friends, yet for the most part was able to take care of the homestead. Two other daughters were married, and their children became occasional enliveners as well as care for the grandmother.

A taste for plants and flowers was always preserved, and the many calls I made them were seldom unmarked by some expression of interest in these graceful silent companions; the fairest flower or most fragrant geranium leaf were often cropped for me. The last visit, a few months since, I shall never forget. I had given a small *Daphne* plant sometime before to her daughter; under her fostering care it had grown to a large size. The mother said, "Bring my plant for Miss S. to see. I call it mine," she said, "see how finely it looks." As it was brought from another room she spoke with all the vivacity of youth—with her most pleased and happy expression of countenance—appeared as bright and well as usual. Within a fortnight, before I heard of her illness, her life had closed in this world. Surely she has gone to regions of blessedness. Her two devoted daughters were with her. She died as she had lived, in peaceful submission to the will of God; saying little of her sufferings, which for some time must have been great, expressing anxiety only lest she should fatigue those who attended her. Much is she missed by the survivors; her example is a felt blessing—her daughters check the expression of their sorrow by the thought how sad it would have been for their mother to have had a lingering illness, and long outlived her usefulness. They resume their employments—speak cheerfully of their departed parent, and forget not to plant her favorite flowers on her grave. What a blessing the memory of such a mother!

F. S.



## MY MOTHER.

SHE had a gentle spirit,  
And a kind and winning way  
To all she met, both great and small —  
No wonder she was lov'd by all  
Who might about her stay.

She had a lightsome fairy step; —  
An almost angel smile; —  
And something in her sweet ton'd voice  
Which seem'd to make all hearts rejoice,  
And all their griefs beguile.

She had, God knows she had a heart,  
As full as heart could be  
Of purest love, and deepest truth;  
In age retaining all its youth,  
And sweet humility.

A fair high brow and deep blue eye  
Were her's — but these alone  
Could ne'er have won from young and old,  
From rich and poor such love untold,  
And made all hearts her own.

Oh! dearest, sweetest, best of friends!  
Could I but even hope  
That like thee I should ever be,  
Oh then would I most willingly  
With all life's sorrows cope!

And will thou not, from thy bright home,  
Look down to comfort me?  
And gently, kindly lead me on,  
Till I at last, that bright goal won,  
Once more may dwell with thee?

S. B.

## MECHANICAL INGENUITY.

AN ingenious mechanic named Boulton, visited France, where he attended a Mechanic's Fair, at which many curious things were exhibited. He asked leave to deposit a needle he had made, among the rest. It was refused, for the managers saw nothing wonderful about it.

An unwilling assent to his request, was finally obtained, and when the fair closed, and the prizes were to be awarded, the arbitrators triumphantly asked, "where was Mr. Boulton's needle? and what were its striking merits, which every one failed to discover?" Thereupon Mr. Boulton again presented it for their inspection, with a magnifying glass, begging them to state whether they observed roughness or wrinkle on its surface. The umpires returned it, saying, "far from it, its sole merit seems to lie in its exquisite polish."

"Behold then," said this ingenious man, "its undiscovered merit, and whilst I prove to you that I have made no vain boast of its claims to your attention, you will learn, perhaps, not to judge so readily again by mere exterior." He then unscrewed the needle, when another appeared of exquisite workmanship; and to the astonished eyes of the Frenchman, about half a dozen beautiful needles were thus turned out, neatly and curiously packed within each other; a miracle of art that seems to rival all we ever read of—truly a "*multum in parvo*." Mr. B. triumphed in his turn, and carried off the prize which his delicate workmanship so richly deserved.— *Youth's Cabinet*.